

# The History of St. Patrick's Day

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Members of the Sheila Tully School of Irish Dance perform during the 52nd Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade in Chicago, Illinois, March 17, 2007. Photo: AP/M. Spencer Green

St. Patrick's Day is celebrated every March 17. It is a religious holiday. It is also the day that Ireland's St. Patrick died many years ago. A saint is someone who lived a good life. They can be an example for others.

People in Ireland celebrate St. Patrick's Day. They have done so for more than 1,000 years. They usually go to church in the morning. In the afternoon, they dance, drink and eat.

## St. Patrick's Day Parade is born

St. Patrick was born in Great Britain. At 16 years old, he was kidnapped and brought to Ireland. He later escaped but would return to Ireland. Historians believe he brought Christianity to the country. After Patrick died, the Irish people continued to tell stories about his life.

The first parade to honor St. Patrick's Day did not take place in Ireland. It was held in the United States. On March 17, 1762. Irish soldiers marched through New York City. The parade made them feel more at home.

## **People never forgot their home**

Irish people who moved to the United States never forgot Ireland. They even brought St. Patrick's Day celebrations with them. Every year, there are parades on the holiday.

One of the biggest parades is still in New York City. Thousands of people go to it every year. Other American cities also celebrate the holiday with parades.

## **Many St. Patrick's Day customs**

A long time ago, Irish-Americans were treated badly. Many people made fun of them. The Irish people decided to work together to become a stronger group. St. Patrick's Day parades were held to show their pride. In 1948, President Harry S. Truman went to the parade in New York City. This made many Irish-Americans proud.

Irish Americans began to move around the United States. They moved to cities like Chicago, Illinois. These cities made their own St. Patrick's Day customs. In Chicago, they color the Chicago River green. Many people wear green on St. Patrick's Day. It is the color of the holiday.

## **St. Patrick's Festival is a huge event**

Many people around the world celebrate St. Patrick's Day. Even people who are not Irish take part.

In Ireland, there is a St. Patrick's Festival every year. About 1 million people take part. The festival lasts for several days. There are parades, shows and fireworks.

**Quiz**

- 1 Which sentence from the article gives an example of HOW St. Patrick's Day is celebrated?
- (A) It is a religious holiday.
  - (B) After Patrick died, the Irish people continued to tell stories about his life.
  - (C) In Chicago, they color the Chicago River green.
  - (D) Even people who are not Irish take part.
- 2 Based on the article, what is one reason WHY people began celebrating St. Patrick's Day with parades?
- (A) because parades are fun and easy to plan
  - (B) because parades are a good way to bring people together
  - (C) because more people go to parades than other events
  - (D) because cities enjoy hosting celebrations with parades
- 3 Which section of the article gives information about WHY St. Patrick is celebrated?
- (A) "St. Patrick's Day Parade is born"
  - (B) "People never forgot their home"
  - (C) "Many St. Patrick's Day customs"
  - (D) "St. Patrick's Festival is a huge event"
- 4 What is the purpose of the section "Many St. Patrick's Day customs"?
- (A) to explain why St. Patrick's Day is a popular holiday in New York City
  - (B) to show the history of celebrating St. Patrick's Day in the United States
  - (C) to give information about how St. Patrick's Day celebrations have changed over time
  - (D) to give details about the different ways that St. Patrick's Day is celebrated around the world